

F. No. 11-16/2020-Sch.4  
Government of India  
Ministry of Education  
(Department of School Education & Literacy)

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Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi  
Dated the 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2021

To,

The Additional/Special Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary/Secretary Education of  
all the States and Union Territories

Subject: Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)/ Guidelines for reopening of schools –  
Modification regarding.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to refer to this Ministry's letter of even no. dated the 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 on the above cited subject circulating therewith the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)/ Guidelines for reopening of schools after COVID-19 lockdown and to say in the light of the subsequent guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs from time-to-time regarding opening up of various activities, the SOP on preventive measures to contain spread of COVID-19 in offices issued by the Ministry of Health & F.W. on 13-02-2021 and the extensive vaccination coverage of people above the age of 18 years including teaching and non-teaching staff working in schools / educations institutions, the SOP/Guidelines on reopening of schools circulated by this Ministry through the letter under reference have been reviewed in consultation with the Ministry of Health & F.W. and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

2. Consequent upon the aforesaid review, it has been considered expedient to make the following modifications/additions in the SOP/Guidelines on reopening of schools circulated by this Ministry through the letter under reference:

<b>Part- I      SOPs FOR HEALTH, HYGIENE AND SAFETY</b>			
<b>Section I : STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs) FOR HEALTH, HYGIENE AND OTHER SAFETY PROTOCOLS BEFORE OPENING OF SCHOOLS</b>			
<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Sub-section</b>	<b>Existing provision</b>	<b>Modified/added provision</b>
1.	<b>(f) Display Signages and markings for enforcing physical distancing and safety protocols</b>	-	The following may be added/inserted:  • 'Specific markings may be made with sufficient distance to manage the queue and ensure physical distancing in

			<b>the school premises'</b>
2.	<b>(h) School events, congregations, meetings, etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools should not undertake school events where physical/social distancing is not possible.</li> <li>• Functions and celebration of festivals should be avoided in schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Gathering/congregations should be in accordance with the SOPs of the State/UT. Schools may, accordingly, undertake school events (i.e., cultural/ sports activities/ annual day/ exhibitions, etc.) subject to SOP of the State/UT concerned. States/ UTs may evolve suitable SoPs for safe conduct of such group activities / events'.</li> </ul>
3.	<b>(i) Parent's/ Guardian's consent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States/UTs should take the consent of parents/guardians before their child/ward begins attending schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'The State and UT Governments may decide at their level whether their schools are required to take the consent of the parents of the students for attending the physical classes'.</li> </ul>
4.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students willing to study from home with the consent of the parents may be allowed to do so.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'The decision whether or not the parental consent is required for allowing students to study from home may be taken by the respective State and UT Governments.'</li> </ul>
5.	<b>(j) Sensitize students, parents, teachers, community members and hostel staff on COVID-19 related challenges and their role:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendations of MoHFW are to be followed, i.e., "All employees who are at higher risk, i.e., older employees, pregnant employees and employees who have underlying medical conditions to take extra precautions.. They should preferably not be exposed to any frontline work requiring direct contact with the students."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendations of MoHFW are to be followed, i.e., "All employees who are at higher risk, i.e., older employees, pregnant employees and employees who have underlying medical conditions to take extra precautions. They should preferably not be exposed to any frontline work requiring direct contact with the students." <b>Similarly, necessary precautions may be taken in respect of the children with co-morbidities.</b></li> </ul>

6.	(l) Redefine the school attendance and sick leave policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance must not be enforced, and must depend entirely on parental consent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The decision whether or not the parental consent is required for attending the physical classes by the students may be taken by the respective States and UT Governments.</li> </ul>
<b>Section- II. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs) FOR HEALTH, HYGIENE AND OTHER SAFETY PROTOCOLS TO BE FOLLOWED AFTER OPENING OF SCHOOLS</b>			
7.	(c) Ensure Safe Commuting of Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sanitization of school transportation on regular basis at least twice a day – once before children board the transport and once after.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sanitization of school transportation, <b>interior and exterior</b>, on regular basis at least twice a day – once before children board the transport and once after <b>students de-board</b> may be done by using 1% sodium hypochlorite solution/spray. A proper disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, i.e., steering, door handles, keys, etc., should be done. 70% Alcohol can be used to wipe down surfaces where the use of bleach is not suitable, e.g., metal.</li> </ul>
8.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Driver and conductor should maintain physical distance at all times and ensure physical/social distancing among students in the bus/cab.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Driver and conductor should maintain physical distance at all times <b>particularly within rooms/spaces designated for the drivers. They should</b> ensure physical distancing among students in the bus/cab. <b>They shall follow the required do's and don'ts related to COVID 19. School drivers/conductors residing in containment zones shall not be allowed to board the vehicles.</b></li> </ul>
9.	(d) Implement Safe School Practices for safe arrival and departure of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical/social distancing norms should be followed, both, during arrival and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Physical distancing</b> norms should be followed, both, during arrival and departure time, to and from school.</li> </ul>

	<b>staff and students</b>	departure time, to and from school. Minimum 6 feet physical distance should be maintained when queuing up for entry and inside the school.	Minimum 6 feet physical distance should be maintained when queuing up for entry and inside the school. <b>Specific markings may be made with sufficient distance to manage the queue.</b>
10.	<b>(e) Ensure safety norms in classrooms and other places</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group activities in games, sports, music, dance or other performing art classes may be allowed only if it is feasible to maintain physical distance and following health safety norms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group activities in games, sports, music, dance or other performing art classes may be allowed only if it is feasible to maintain physical distance and following health safety norms. <b>This would further be subject to SOP of the State/UT concerned. State/UTs may evolve suitable SoPs for safe conduct of such group activities / events.</b></li> </ul>
11.	<b>(f) Protocol to be followed in case of detection of a suspected case of COVID-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A risk assessment will be undertaken by the designated public health authority (district Rapid Response Team/treating physician) and accordingly further action be initiated regarding management of case, his/her contacts and need for disinfection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A risk assessment will be undertaken by the designated public health authority (district Rapid Response Team/treating physician) and accordingly further action be initiated regarding management of case, his/her contacts and need for disinfection. <b>The management of cases and contacts will be done as per the existing protocol</b> (<a href="https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/FinalGuidanceonManagementofCovidcasesversion2.pdf">https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/FinalGuidanceonManagementofCovidcasesversion2.pdf</a> and <a href="https://ncdc.gov.in/showfile.php?lid=570">https://ncdc.gov.in/showfile.php?lid=570</a>).</li> <li>If there are one or two cases reported, the disinfection procedure will be limited to places/areas occupied and visited by the patient in past 48 hours and work can be resumed after disinfection as</li> </ul>

			<p>per laid down protocol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In case of larger numbers of cases are being reported at the school, the whole block or building, as the case may be, should be disinfected.</li> </ul>
12	g) Physical/social distancing during distribution of Mid-Day Meal	--	g) Physical distancing to be ensured during distribution of meals under the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN).
<b>PART – II LEARNING WITH PHYSICAL DISTANCING</b>			
<b>Section - V. ENSURING SMOOTH TRANSITION OF STUDENTS FROM HOME-BASED SCHOOLING DURING LOCKDOWN TO FORMAL SCHOOLING</b>			
13.			<p>The following may be added / inserted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><u>STUDENT SUPPORT ON SCHOOL REOPENING</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Readiness Module/Bridge Course may be prepared and implemented in classrooms. Once school reopens, the grade related syllabus should be undertaken only after the bridge course is completed, so that students can adjust to the changed school environment and do not feel the stress or left out, especially students who did not have access to alternate means of education.</li> <li>Identification of students across different grades based on their learning levels can be done, especially for smaller classes, so that teachers can</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

			<p>focus on those who need additional interventions.</p> <p>3. Wherever states have amended their State RTE Rules to allow for detention in classes 5 and/or 8, they may consider giving relaxation from detention this year. This would go a long way in preventing drop outs. States may like to keep a watch on the situation for any further considerations to prevent drop outs until the pandemic related situation stabilizes.</p> <p>4. Two of the most important skills that a school going child needs to acquire and retain are the skills of reading with comprehension and numeracy skills. It is, therefore, important to do the following:</p> <p>a. Ensure that every child reads a lot, and reads books beyond the syllabus, that are grade appropriate and are both, interesting and challenging. For this, the schools may permit children to borrow books from school libraries, and/or suggest grade appropriate links from open and free online resources such as- <a href="https://storyweaver.org.in/">https://storyweaver.org.in/</a>, <a href="https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/">https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/</a>, etc.</p> <p>b. Creative writing is a great way to improve children's written language skills. Teachers and parents may encourage this fun and imaginative activity on a weekly basis. If schools have not reopened, States/UTs may consider</p>
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			<p>permitting children to post their creative writing, duly recommended by the schools, on a common portal.</p> <p>c. States/UTs may consider giving one real-life situation based mathematical problem a day to each child to engage the child joyfully in mathematics. In this context, at least for grades 6-10, the Five-Questions-A-Week (5QAW) hosted on DIKSHA by CBSE may be utilized. Also, identified mathematical games/board games/Apps may also be encouraged.</p> <p>5. Large-scale remedial programmes/ Learning enhancement programmes may be implemented to mitigate learning loss and prevent exacerbation of learning inequality, with a focus on literacy and numeracy for primary-age children and accessibility accommodations for children with disabilities.</p>
<b>Section - VI – ENSURING EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS</b>			
14.	<b>BOX</b>	<p>The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has initiated a programme called 'MANODARPAN' covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Education, Government of India has initiated a programme called 'MANODARPAN' covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond. States and UTs may encourage stakeholders to avail of the services of this programme.</p> <p>The services include:</p>

		<p>The services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A webpage <a href="http://manodarpan.mhrd.gov.in">http://manodarpan.mhrd.gov.in</a> on the website of MHRD containing advisories and motivational posters, and</li> <li>• A National Toll-free helpline 8448440632 to provide tele-counselling for students, parents and teachers to help cope with the situation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A webpage <a href="https://manodarpan.education.gov.in">https://manodarpan.education.gov.in</a> on the website of Ministry of Education containing advisories and motivational posters, and</li> <li>• A National Toll-free helpline 8448440632 to provide tele-counselling for students, parents and teachers to help cope with the situation.</li> </ul>
<b>Annexure A</b>			
<b>PROMOTING EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS (Guidelines for Students at Elementary and Higher Stages)</b>			
<b>D. SUGGESTIVE ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS TO TAKE CARE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH</b>			
15.		<p>In order to promote the mental health of students and teachers, the schools can develop well-being policy or plan with a specific focus on promoting resilience among them. Students, teachers and schools may also be encouraged to visit the website <a href="http://manodarpan.mhrd.gov.in">http://manodarpan.mhrd.gov.in</a> of MHRD and avail of the tele-counselling services to be provided on National Toll-free helpline 8448440632 under the MANODARPAN initiative of MHRD to provide psychosocial support for mental health and emotional</p>	<p>In order to promote the mental health of students and teachers, the schools can develop well-being policy or plan with a specific focus on promoting resilience among them. Students, teachers and schools may also be encouraged to visit the website of Ministry of Education (<a href="https://education.gov.in">https://education.gov.in</a>) (web-page: <a href="https://manodarpan.education.gov.in">https://manodarpan.education.gov.in</a>) and avail of the tele-counselling services to be provided on National Toll-free helpline 8448440632 under the MANODARPAN initiative of Ministry of Education to provide psychosocial support for mental health and emotional wellbeing of students, teachers and families during the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond.</p>



		wellbeing of students, teachers and families during the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond.	
<b><u>Annexure B</u></b>			
<b>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS</b>			
<b>III. TEACHERS</b>			
16.	<b>2. On re-opening of schools:</b>	a. Allow children to attend school with written consent of their parents.	<b>a. The State and UT Governments may decide at their level whether their schools are required to take the consent of the parents of the students for attending the physical classes.</b>
<b>IV. PARENTS / GUARDIANS</b>			
17.	<b>Parents /guardians may take the following steps:</b>	1. Provide written consent for their children to attend school if they wish to send to school.	<b>1. Provide written consent for their children to attend school, in case their State / UT Government asks for such consent from the parents of the students for attending the physical classes</b>

3. The phrase, namely, 'physical/social distancing' wherever appearing in the SOP/Guidelines, may be replaced by the phrase, namely, '**physical distancing**'.

4. The phrase, namely, 'Mid-Day Meal', wherever appearing in the SOP/Guidelines may be replaced by the phrase, namely, '**PM POSHAN**'.

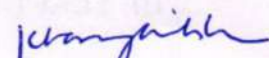
5. The phrases, namely, 'Ministry of Human Resource Development' or 'MHRD' wherever appearing in the SOP/Guidelines, may be replaced by the phrase, namely, 'Ministry of Education'.

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6. The aforesaid modifications / additions have the concurrence / approvals of the Ministry of Health & F.W. vide their letter no. Z. 28015/275/2020-EMR-DM Cell dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2021 and the Ministry of Home Affairs vide their O.M. No. 40-6/2020- DM-1(A) dated the 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2021 read with their OM dated the 14<sup>th</sup> December, 2021.

7. All the State and UT Governments and other concerned are requested to take further appropriate action in the matter.

Yours faithfully,

  
(Khamngaih Lun)

Under Secretary to the Government of India  
Tel: 2338 1434

Copy to:

1. Director, NCERT
2. Chairman, CBSE
3. Chairman, NCTE
4. Chairperson, NIOS
5. Commissioner, KVS
6. Commissioner, NVS
7. Director, CTSA
8. Director, NBB
9. Additional Secretary (SE)/Additional Secretary (SS-I)/ Joint Secretary (Institutions)/Joint Secretary (SS-II)/Joint Secretary (MDM)/Joint Secretary (Adult Education & Coordination)/EA, D/SE&L
10. Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, North Block, New Delhi
11. Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi
12. Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
13. Secretary, Ministry of Defence, South Block, New Delhi.
14. Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
15. Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
16. Director, SCERT of all the States & UTs.
17. State Project Director (SPD), Samagra Shiksha of all the States and UTs.

Copy, for information, to:

1. PS to SM/PS to MoS(AD)/Office of MoS ( SS )/ Office of MoS (RRS)
2. PPS to Secretary (SE&L)